IMPRIMATUR,

MARCH 31, 1686.

MICHAEL JEPHSON.

To the most Reverend Fathers in God, William *Lord Archbishop of* Canterbury, *Primate of all* England *and Metropolitan, and* John *Lord Archbishop of* York, *Primate of* England *and Metropolitan.*

JAMES R.

MOST Reverend Fathers in God, We Greet you well. Whereas the bold abuses & extravagancies of Preachers in the Pulpit, have not only by the experience of former Ages been found to tend to the Dishonour of God, the Scandal of Religion, and Disturbance of the Peace both of Church and State, but did also (through the Licentiousness of the late Rebellious times) much increase to the Inflaming

ming, Fomenting, and Heightening of the ſad Diſtempers and Confuſions that were then among us: And whereas even at this preſent (notwithſtanding the merciful Providence of God, ſo ſignally manifeſted in Reſtoring Our Royal Family, and the Lawful Government of theſe Realms, and putting an end to the great Rebellion, and notwithſtanding the Pious care and endeavours of Our late Dear Brother, and Our Self ever ſince, to Govern Our Realms in Peace and Tranquility) it may juſtly be feared that in ſundry parts of this Realm, there want not men of unquiet and Factious Spirits, who inſtead of Preaching the pure Word of God, and building up the People in Faith and Holineſs, will (if they be not reſtrained) make it a great part of their Buſineſs to beget in the minds of their Hearers, an evil Opinion of their Governours, by inſinuating Fears and Jealouſies,

ſies, to diſpoſe them to Diſcontent, and to ſeaſon them with ſuch unſound and dangerous Principles as may lead them into Diſobedience, Schiſm, and Rebellion: And whereas alſo ſundry young Divines, and Preachers, either out of a Spirit of Contention and Contradiction, or in a vain oſtentation of their Learning, take upon them in their popular Sermons, to handle the deep Points of God's Eternal Councils and Decrees, or to meddle with the Affairs of State and Government, or to wrangle about Forms and Geſtures, and other fruitleſs Diſputes and Controverſies, ſerving rather to amuſe than profit the Hearers; which is done for the moſt part, and with the greateſt Confidence, by ſuch perſons as leaſt underſtand them: We out of Our Princely Care and Zeal for the Honour of God, the Advancement of Piety, Peace, and true Religion, and for the preventing for the future, as much

much as lieth in Us, the many and great inconveniencies and miſchiefs that will unavoidably enſue, if a timely ſtop be not given to theſe and the like growing Abuſes; Do, according to the Examples of ſeveral of Our Predeceſſors of Bleſſed Memory, by theſe Our ſpecial Letters ſtraitly Charge and Command you, to uſe your utmoſt Care and Diligence that theſe Directions, which upon long and ſerious Conſideration, Our late Dear Brother thought good to give concerning Preachers, * and which we upon like Conſideration have Approved and cauſed to be Reprinted, and herewith ſent unto you, be from henceforth duly and ſtrictly obſerved by all the Bishops and others concerned therein within your Provinces. And to this end Our Will and Pleaſure is, That you forthwith ſend them Copies of theſe Our Directions, to be by them ſpeedily Communicated to every Parſon, Vicar, Curate,

* *Anno* 1662.

Curate, Lecturer, and Preacher in every Cathedral, Collegiate, and Parish-Church within their ſeveral Dioceſſes: And that you earneſtly Require them to imploy their utmoſt endeavour for the due Obſervation of the ſame, whereof We ſhall expect a ſtrict Account, both of you, and every one of them: And theſe our Letters ſhall be your ſufficient Warrant and Diſcharge in that behalf.

Given at Our Court at Whitehal *the Fifth day of March* 1685. *In the Second Year of Our Reign.*

By His Majeſties Command,

SUNDERLAND P.

DIRECTIONS

Concerning

PREACHERS.

I.

That no Preachers in their Sermons presume to meddle with Matters of State, to Model new Governments, or take upon them to Declare, Limit, or Bound out the Power and Authority of Soveraign Princes, or to State and Determine the Differences between Princes and the People; But that upon all good Occasions they faithfully Instruct

the People in their Bounden Duty of Subjection and Obedience to their Governours, Superiour and Subordinate of all sorts, and to the Established Laws according to the Word of God, and the Doctrine of the Church of England, as it is contained in the Homilies of Obedience, and the Articles of Religion set forth by Publick Authority.

II.

That they be Admonished not to spend their Time, and Study in the Search of Abstruse and Speculative Notions, especially in and about the deep points of Election and Reprobation, together with the Incomprehensible manner of the Concurrence of Gods free Grace, and Mans free Will, and such other Controversies as depend thereupon: But howsoever that they presume not Positively, and Doctrinally to Determine any thing concerning the same.

III.

That they forbear in their Sermons ordinarily and carefully to enter upon the Handling of any other Controversies of less Moment and Difficulty: But whensoever they are occasioned by Invitation from the Text they Preach upon, or that in regard of the Auditory they Preach unto, it may seem Requisite or expedient so to do; That in such cases they do it with all Modesty, Gravity and Candour, Asserting the Doctrine and Discipline of the Church

of

of England, from the Cavils and Objections of such as are Adversaries to either, without Bitterness, Railing, Jearing, or other unnecessary or unseemly Provocation.

IV.

That for the more Edifying of the People in Faith and Godliness (the aforesaid abuses laid aside) all Ministers and Preachers in their several respective Cures shall not only diligently apply themselves to Catechise the Younger sort according as in the Book of Common Prayer is appointed; But also shall in their ordinary Sermons Insist chiefly upon Catechetical Doctrines (wherein are contained all the necessary and undoubted Verities of Christian Religion) Declaring withal unto their Congregations what Influences such Doctrines ought to have into their Lives and Conversations, and stirring them up Effectually, as well by their Examples, as their Doctrines, to the Practice of such Religious and Moral Duties, as are the proper Results of the said Doctrines, as Self-denial, Contempt of the World, Humility, Patience, Meekness, Temperance, Justice, Mercy, Obedience, and the like; And to a Detestation and Shunning of Sin, especially such Sins as are so rife among us, and common to the Age we live in; such are those usually Stiled the Seven Deadly ones. in short, all kind of Debauchery, Sensuality, Rebellion, Profaneness, Atheism, and the like. And because the late Licentious Times have Corrupted Religion even in the very Roots and Foundations. That where there is an Afternoons

Exercise.

Exercise, it be especially Spent either in Explaining some part of the Church-Catechism, or in Preaching upon some such Text of Scripture, as will Properly and Naturally lead to the Handling of some thing Contained in it, or may Conduce to the Exposition of the Liturgy, and Prayers of the Church (as Occasion shall be offered) the only cause They grew into Contempt amongst the People being this, that they were not Understood, That also the Minister as often as Conveniently he can, Read the Prayers himself; and when he cannot so do, he Procure or Provide some fit Person in Holy Orders, who may do it with that Gravity, Distinctness, Devotion, and Reverence as becomes so Holy an Action: And whensoever by Reason of his Infirmity or the Concurrence of other Offices, the Time may seem too short, or he unable to Perform the Office of both Prayers and Sermon at length, he rather shorten his Discourse or Sermon, then Omit any thing of the Prayers, lest he Incur the Penalty of the Act for Uniformity, Requiring them to be Read according as the Book Directs.

V.

And further Our Will and Pleasure is, That all Ministers within their several Cures, be enjoyed publickly to read over unto the People, such Canons as are or shall be in force, at least once, and the Thirty nine Articles twice every year, to the end they may the better understand, and be more throughly acquainted with the Doctrine and Discipline of the Church of England, and not so easily drawn away from it as formerly they have been.

VI. And

VI.

Since Preaching was not Anciently the work of every Priest, but was restrained to the choicest Persons for Gravity, Prudence and Learning; the Archbishops and Bishops of this Kingdom are to take great care whom they Licence to Preach, and that all Grants and Licences of this kind heretofore made by any Chancellor, Official, Commissary, or other Secular Person (who are presumed not to be so Competent Judges in matters of this nature) be accounted Void and Null, unless the same shall likewise be allowed by the Archbishop or the Bishop of the Diocess, and that all Licences of Preachers hereafter to be made or granted by any Archbishop or Bishop, shall be only during Pleasure, otherwise to be void to all intents and purposes as if the same had never been made nor granted.

VII.

Lastly, That for the better observing of the Lords-Day too much neglected of late, they shall, as by often and serious Admonitions and sharp Reproofs, endeavour to draw off People from such Idle, Debauched and Profane courses as dishonour God, bring a Scandal on Religion, and Contempt on the Laws and Authority Ecclesiastical and Civil, so shall they very earnestly perswade them to frequent Divine Service on the Lords-Day, and other Festivals appointed by the Church to be kept Solemn; And in case any Person shall resort unto any Taverns or Ale-houses, or use any unlawful Sports & Exercises on such

such days, the Minister shall Exhort those which are in Authority in their several Parishes and Congregations, carefully to look after all such Offenders in any kind whatsoever, together with all those that Abett, Receive, or Entertain them, that they may be Proceeded against according to the Laws, and quality of their Offences, that all such Disorders may for the time to come be prevented.

Given at Our Court at *Whitehall* the 5th. day of *March*, 1685. In the Second Year of Our Reign.

By His Majesties Command,

Sunderland P.

DUBLIN,

Re-printed by *Joseph Ray*, for *Robert Thornton* at the Leather-Bottle, in *Skinner-row*, 1686.